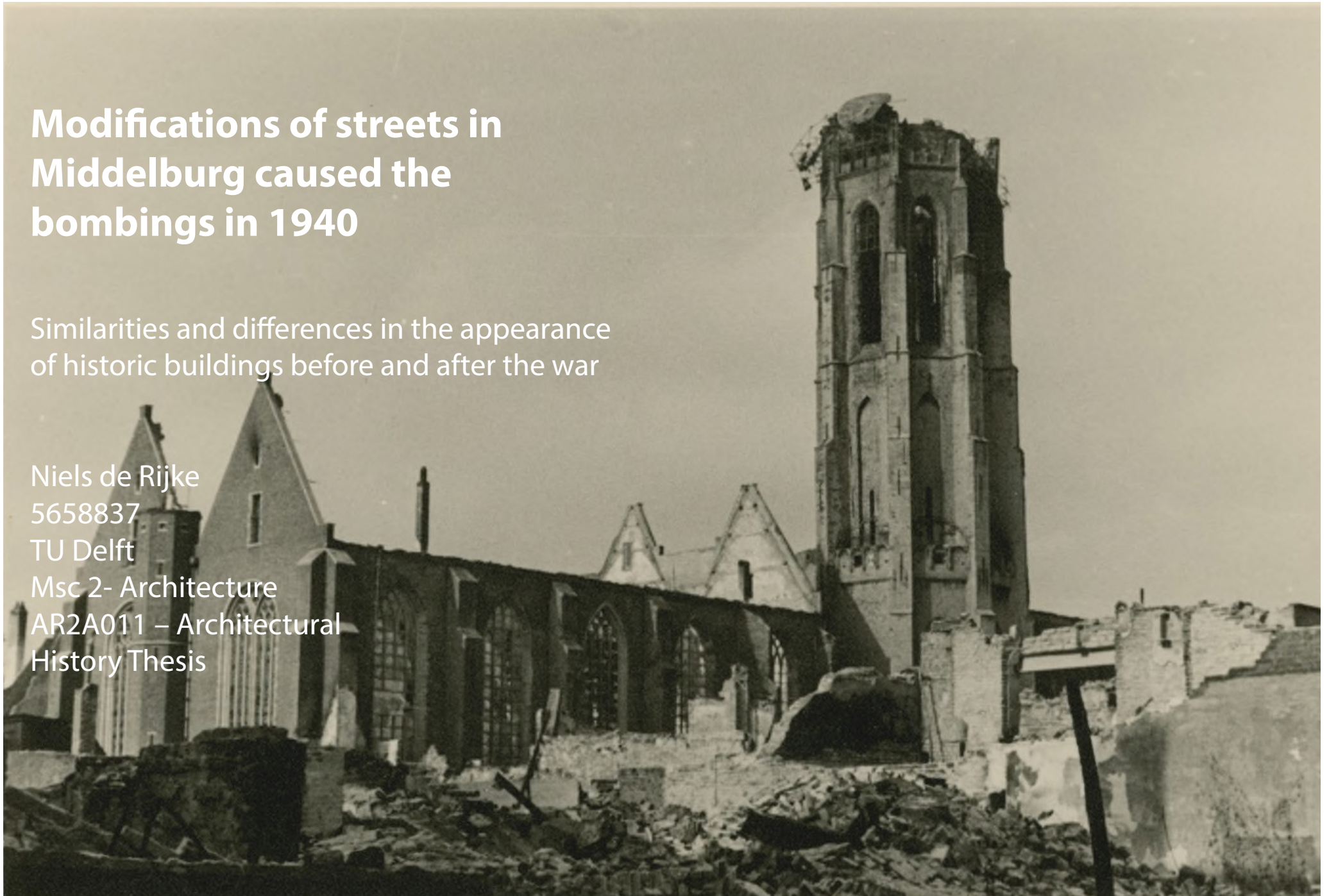


# Modifications of streets in Middelburg caused the bombings in 1940

Similarities and differences in the appearance  
of historic buildings before and after the war

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History Thesis



**Thesis title**

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Subtitle

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Thesis type

History thesis

Student name

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Educational Institution

TU Delft

Mastertrack

Msc 2- Architecture

Course number

AR2A011 – Architectural

Course name

Architectural History Thesis

Course period

2022/23 Q3

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Date

18-04-2023

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# Abstract

During the second world war, Middelburg was destroyed by a major city fire and much of the historic, romantic Dutch architecture has been destroyed. The aim of the thesis is to get more information about the differences and comparisons of aesthetics of streets including morphology and materials between before and after the war. First, multiple sources will be analysed. Old pictures, drawings and façade views can be studied at municipal archives. Construction drawings of restorations from architects, articles and studies published on the internet about the restoration of the city centre will be analysed. There will be an average analysis of the most common differences and similarities between the facade aesthetics between before and after the war. Presumably there is a chronological connection between buildings and/or streets of changes in materials, form or window arrangements. This thesis can be used as a guideline in the restoration and preservation of façade images in Middelburg for the future. By giving answer to the research question: *How did the bombing during the second World War change the aesthetics of historic buildings in the city Middelburg?* architects can bring back and design elements of the past in future renovation or new construction projects.

Suppose this research has shown that there is a rhythm in the use of materials, brick bonds, rod divisions, roof mouldings, etc. can provide a guideline for restoration architects in Middelburg. The expectation is that many historic buildings have been restored to the original destroyed building. The city centre still has a historic character with old ornaments. Even though the city was destroyed, its romantic, characteristic appearance has been retained. Therefore during the case study it is expected that many elements of the destroyed facades have been restored to the new facade.



# Introduction

"The air alarm went off, everyone rushed into the basement. "And as we sat on the bed, I heard the same sound as a few days before: high-pitched whistling and then a bang." (Jo Witte, may 2014) on May 17th 1940, Middelburg found itself in a line of fire between the Germans and French. Rotterdam had already been bombed by the Germans after which the Netherlands had surrendered. The French had anticipated that the Netherlands was occupied by the Germans and strode into Zeeland to stop the Germans. Middelburg was in the Line of Fire after which it is still unclear whether the Germans bombed Middelburg or the French shelled Middelburg to keep the Germans out. (Research by R. Bruins Slot, 2014) One thing that is certain is that over 1/3 of Middelburg went up in flames. Especially around the Grote Markt and the abbey, entire streets and monuments were destroyed. Middelburg had many monumental buildings with ornate facades. Realised in the 17th and 18th centuries when Middelburg was a big trading town because of its convenient location on the Westerschelde estuary. In the 19th century, the Netherlands and thus also Zeeland became impoverished so there was no money to adapt buildings and streets. As a result, centuries-old buildings were standing in the town of Middelburg.

After the massive town fire, the town changed. Urban planning as well as architecture has changed the town. To map the changes, historical archive maps and photos are analysed. Typical Dutch/century characteristic elements in the facades are listed. The buildings in the devastated streets are shown, giving a good idea of the extent of the change in architecture. During reconstruction, they brought back old historical elements in the facades. The historical characteristic elements from before the 1940 bombing are compared with the elements of the reconstruction. Which elements did returned to bring back the typical Middelburg's sphere. The most devastated streets will be studied.

After analysing the similarities and differences between architecture before and after the bombing, the architectural features can be implemented in contemporary architecture. Without studying history, it is impossible to investigate how Middelburg came to be the way it looks today and which architectonic features were brought back during reconstruction. Even though reconstruction was not that long ago, it is still in the centre of a protected cityscape. Which means that the appearance of the buildings is not allowed to be changed easily, probably because of the characteristic facades brought back during reconstruction. Is the variation in materials less, have the decorative cornices been brought back, are the roofs different etc. By studying how it was before, restoration architects or architects for new buildings can implement elements from the past in their designs.

# 1. URBAN MORPHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT IN MIDDELBURG: 16th to 20th C.

The name Middelburg is derived from refuge fortresses (vluchtburgen in dutch). The town of Middelburg has a typological urban design of moats surrounding the town centre. These refuge fortresses provided protection from Vikings and high water levels in the 9th century, see figure 2. The fortress developed into a trading centre due to its convenient location on the River Arne (W. S. UNGER, 1966). Figure 3 shows a map of how Middelburg expanded into a pre-worthy town.

The art and architecture event organization called 'façade' released a survey of typological façade images up to the 20th century in 2012. They examined the development of aesthetics through centuries. (Facade, 2012)

## Up to 16th century

Architecture up to the 16th century went through different phases in Middelburg. In the distant past, they built houses of natural materials such as wood and thatch. Stone did apply for the first time until the 12th century in prominent buildings such as the Abbey, Nieuwe Kerk and Lange Jan. These were mainly applied in the Gothic style, just as the town hall that was built later. From the 16th century houses were only built of stone because of fire hazards. At this time, manysteped gables in natural stone were applied (figure 4).

## 17th & 18th centuries

In the 17th century, bell and scrollwork gables were realised in addition to stepped gables. Facades were increasingly decorated with ornaments. For example, arches above frame windows, gable stones, renaissance features, circular arches and cornices. Homeowners with enough money created more ornaments on facades in classic baroque style. This style is characterised by wide gables, symmetry and pilasters. (Façade, 2012)

## 18th & 19th centuries

In the 18th century, people built a lot in Louis XVI style which is characteristic of clean lines and symmetry. In the 19th century, people built in the neo-classic style. Architects were no longer inspired by the past but by plants, recognizable by organic ornaments and ironwork. (Façade, 2012)

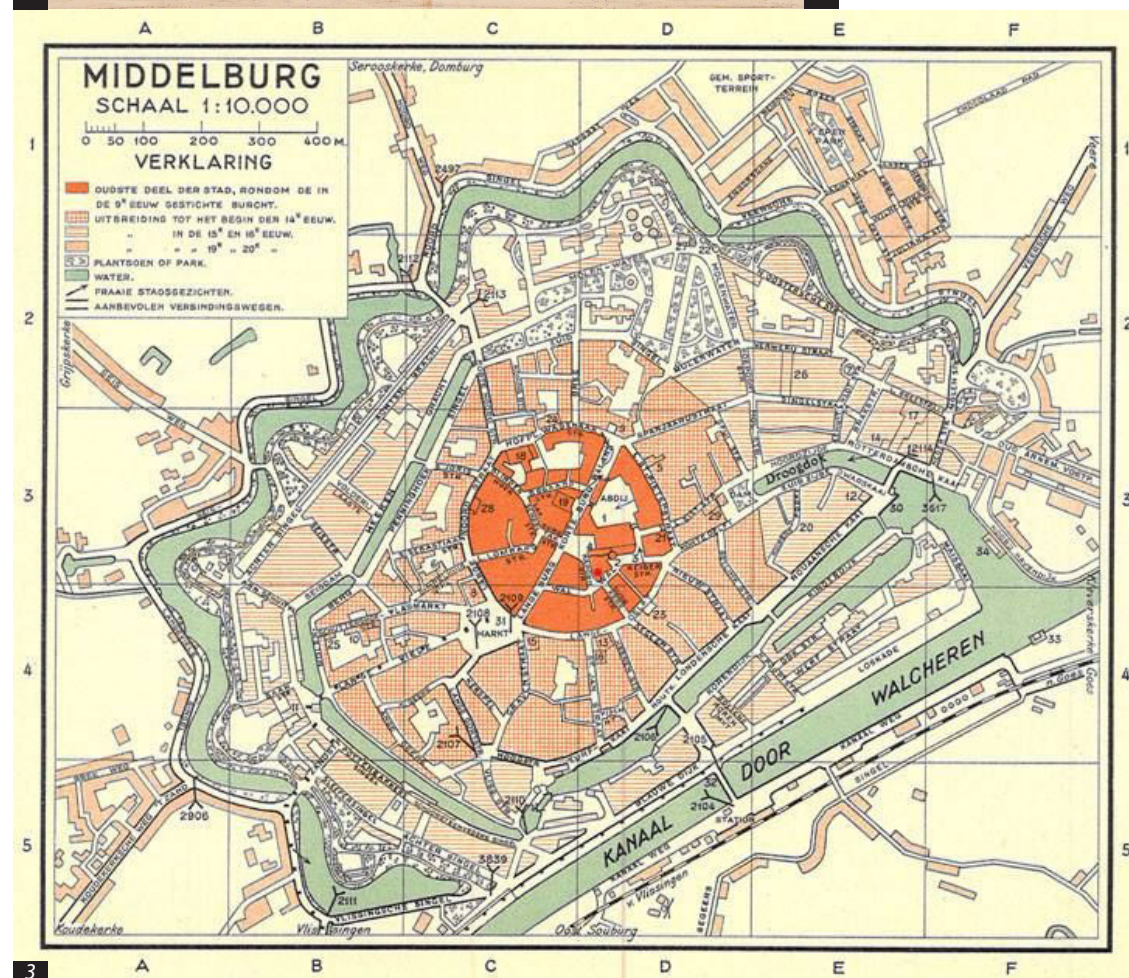
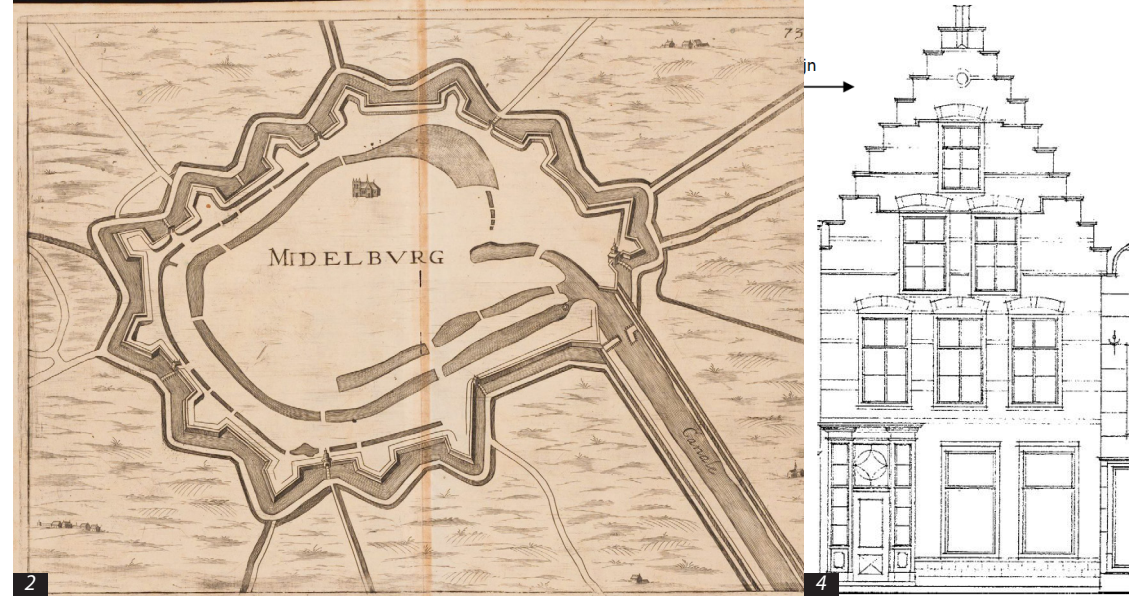
## 20th century

The 20th century features use of brick inspired by Amsterdam school expressi- onism. Concrete, steel and glass were also widely used. Ornamentals were little used anymore. In 1940, the bombing in the second world war destroyed much of the city centre. After this, it was rebuilt in traditional Delft school style. (Façade, 2012)

2. Map of Middelburg c. 9th century ©Zeeuwsarchief

3. Map of Middelburg development ©Zeeuwsarchief

4. Lange Noordstraat 33 c. 1600 ©Facade 2012





## 2. DESTRUCTION OF THE BOMBINGS DURING WORLD WAR II

### Occasion of bombings

During the second world war (WWII) many buildings were demolished in the Netherlands by bombings of the Germans. In a few days, the Netherlands surrendered after the aggressive violence. However, in Zeeland the battle had not yet been given up and the French came to the rescue. The Dutch government had already given up but the French refused to give up. The mayor J. van Walré de Bordes had advised the inhabitants of Middelburg to leave the town, which limited casualties. However, many buildings had been destroyed in the historic centre, resulting in many people becoming homeless and public buildings could no longer be used. (Zeeuwsarchief, n.d.)

On May 17th 1940, Middelburg came under fire because the French did not surrender the battle against the Germans. This put Middelburg in the line of fire. It is claimed that the fire in Middelburg centre was a tactical disruption fire by the French rather than a strategic bombardment by the Germans. Since the French would not surrender after a bombardment in the Dutch city, it would not have been a strategic bombardment which was the case in Rotterdam (T. Goossens, 2012). To this day, evidence to blame the French is lacking and several critical counter-arguments are mentioned. (Zeeuwsarchief, n.d.)

### Fire borders

Figure 5 is an image of a map showing which areas and buildings were destroyed after the 1940 bombing. Much of the city centre was destroyed with some outliers outside the centre. This was deliberately done to destroy prominent government and public buildings such as the East India House, for example. (See figures 6 & 7) This devastation destroyed surrounding streets like the shopping streets Lange Delft (80 premises), Lange and Korte Burg (60 premises) and Markt (30 premises). Other heavily affected streets were Gravenstraat (40 premises) and St Pieterstraat (30 premises). (Zeeuwsarchief, n.d.) The differences in aesthetics of these streets caused by the bombings in 1940 will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

5. Map Middelburg demolished boundaries ©Gemeente Middelburg/zeeuwsarchief

6. Oost-indisch huis aan Rotterdamsekaai ©H.B.E. Warnaars/Zeeuws Archief

7. Oost-indisch huis aan Rotterdamsekaai na bombardement 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief



5



6



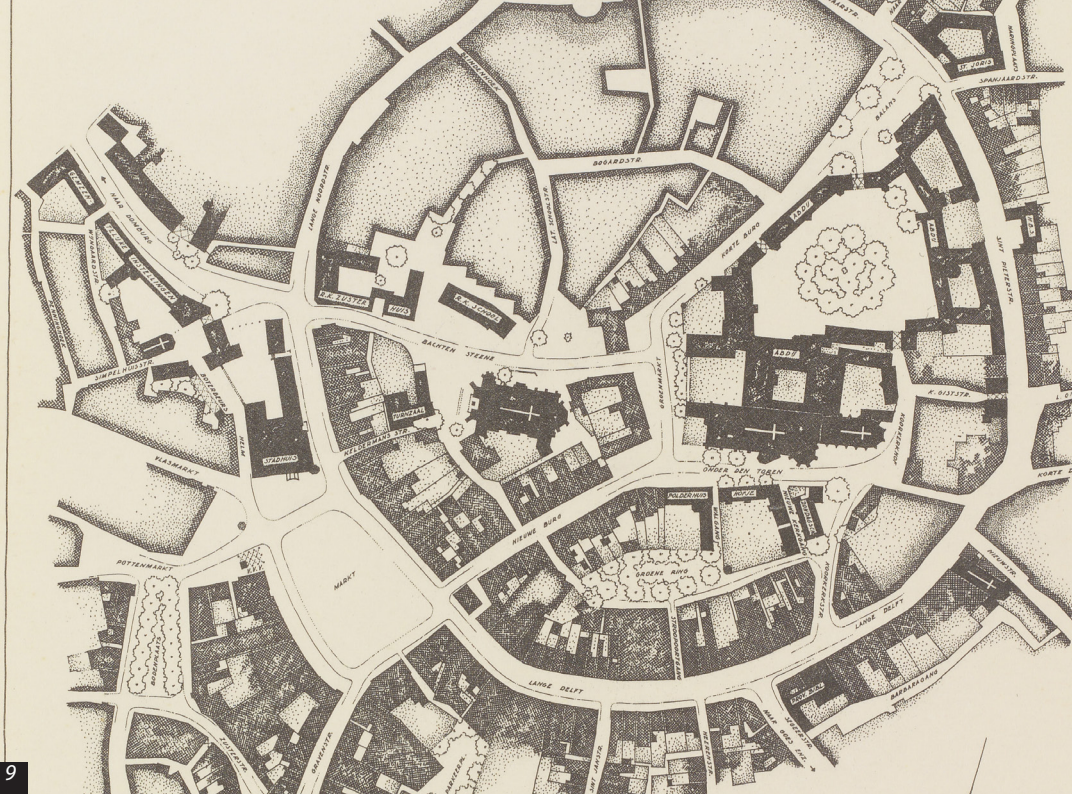
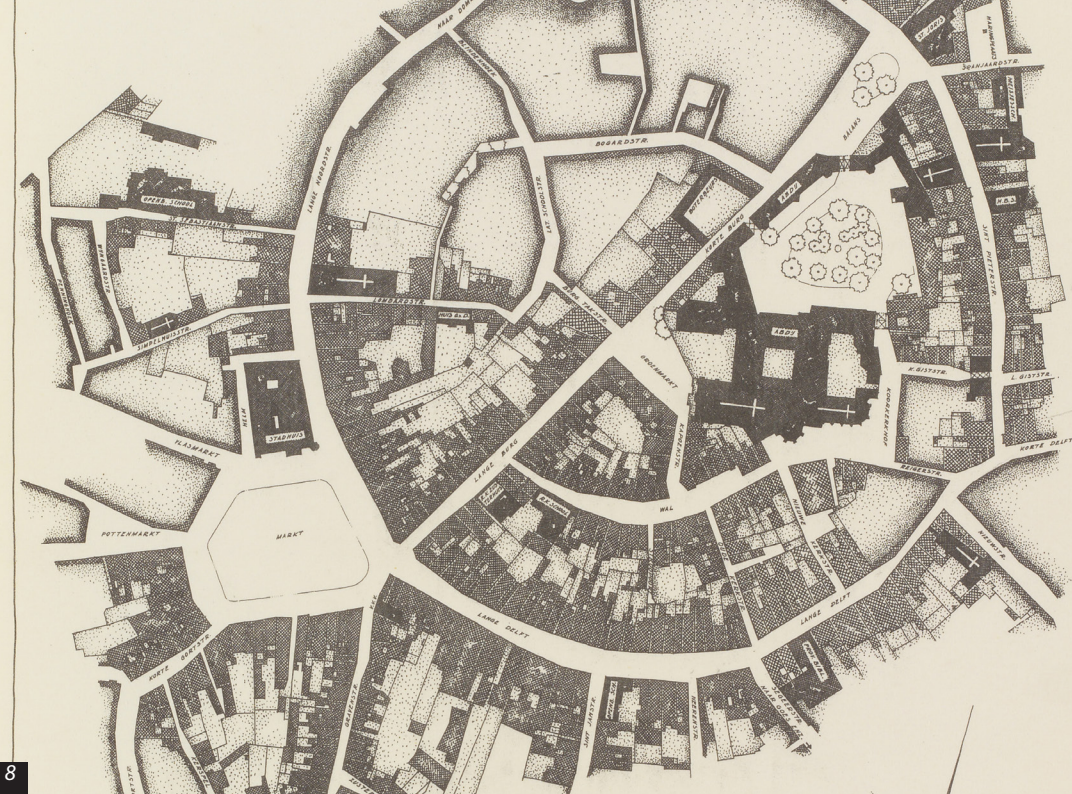
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### 3. URBANISM BEFORE AND AFTER 1940

Middelburg had developed different architectural styles over decades/centuries, see chapter 1.2. This subchapter asks the question, what has been destroyed in the town and what important urban planning elements have changed? This chapter zooms in with the specific streets and neighborhoods mentioned in the previous subchapter 2.2 Fire borders.

Figure 8 shows a map made in 1940 showing the old situation with the devastated neighborhoods caused by the 1940 bombing. Figure 9 shows the same streets but in the new situation. It is notable that Lange Burg now runs differently at different angles. Other adjustments to the map is Plein 1940. This square is named after the war because this square was created by the bombings. Entire residential blocks were wiped out, allowing for adjustments in the urban plans. The Market square was also reshaped. It was reduced in size as new buildings were built closer to the market, making it rectangular. Gravenstraat used to end up at an intersection with Lange Burg and Lange Delft. A row of buildings have now also been placed between Lange Delft and Gravenstraat, so Gravenstraat now starts at a different corner of the Market. Lange Delft and Pieterstraat were largely destroyed but have not been urbanised.



8. Map Middelburg before 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief

9. Map Middelburg after 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief



## 4. ARCHITECTURE BEFORE 1940

The images in this chapter have been analyzed for architectural features with the following numbering:

1. Rod distribution in windows, 2x2 or 3x2
2. Sliding window at the top of frame
3. Framing classic front doors
4. Windows were applied closer together than the floor above.
5. Shop fronts with ornamental mouldings
6. Roof cornices
7. Arches at the top of window frames
8. Roof cornices staggered in heights.
9. Parapet of stone
10. Natural stone facades
11. Blocked pilasters
12. Division between plinth and storey in façade appearance
13. Roofs are rarely seen due to the common hipped roofs
14. Bay windows (Erkers)
15. Tudorarch or ornaments with aesthetic purpose
16. Brick facades decorated with plasterwork
17. Stone step before entrance
18. Facade roofs (geveldaken)

### Lange Delft

Lange Delft is the shopping street of Middelburg. The street connects the Markt with the Damplein, see figure 9. The entire street was destroyed. From the Zeeuwsarchief imagery database, buildings in the Lange Delft were examined from before the bombardment. Because Lange Delft was also formerly the prominent shopping street in the city, this street has many shop windows in the plinths of the facades. These were decorated in detail, see figures 11, 12 & 13. Figure 10 shows an image depicting a traditional historic shopfront consisting of ornaments, glass fronts, cornices, parapets, pilasters and architraves. Elements that most shopfronts in Lange Delft also contained.

Lange Delft had many prominent buildings such as the provincial library (14), Gasthuiskerk (15) and De Gouden Sonne. (16) Important prominent buildings can be recognised by the numerous detailed decorations in the facades. For these buildings, more money was available for the exterior appearance of the building. (Façade, 2019)

10. Historic elements of storefronts ©GemeenteUtrecht

11. Klijberg's schoenmagazijn aan de Lange Delft 114-115 te Middelburg 1905 - 1915 ©Zeeuws Archief, Zeeuws Genootschap, Zelandia Illustrata, deel III, nr 1463

12. De juwelierszaak van J.M. Kempen & Zonen aan de Lange Delft B 138 (43) te Middelburg 1913-1915 ©Zeeuwsarchief

13. De kruidenierszaak "In de Twaalf Uren" van de Firma J.M. van Heusden aan de Lange Delft 17 & 20 te Middelburg ©Zeeuwsarchief

14. Provinciale bibliotheek ©Zeeuwsarchief

15. Gasthuiskerk 1965 ©Zeeuwsarchief, Bitter, J.

16. Gouden Sonne ©Zeeuwsarchief





To learn more about façade images in the street, archive photos from Zeeuwsarchief are analysed. Ornaments, elements and layout of facades are identified. Figure 17 shows a photograph of Lange Delft towards the Markt. Figure 18 shows a drawing of Lange Delft towards the Damplein. Typical Dutch/Middelburg architectural elements are identified. They used to be able to make small glass panes that were held in place under a rod division. Windows therefore mainly consisted of a rod division of 2x2 or 3x2. (1) Large window sections were common for lots of light. In the upper part of the window were often sliding windows consisting of two glass panes. Besides windows as openings in facades, doors also had their characteristics. The plinth of Lange Delft mainly contained shops but some buildings had a front door with decorative cornice with name of the property as well (3). The front door was often situated right below the first-floor window. As a result, a larger window was applied on the ground floor because more light was desired. As a consequence, windows were applied closer together than the floor above (4). In Lange Delft, shops were easily recognised by ornamental mouldings and decorative designations and advertisements (5). Connections of building elements were decorated with detail. Connection of roof to facade, an ornamental cornice was commonly used (6). Occasionally arches at the top of window frames were applied for power transmission or decorative reasons. (7)

Because buildings often had different storey heights and dimensions, the eaves did not merge into each other. Each building staggered with the one next to it, creating a playful streetscape (8). The transition from façade to street usually spanned through a parapet of stone (9). Most facades consisted of bricks but property owners with more money to spend had their facades decorated with natural stone (10). (Facade, 2019) Blocked pilasters were also a sign of wealth and a more elaborate way of facade decoration in the 17th and 18th centuries (11). Because Lange Delft had many shops, facades of houses also had a division between plinth and the first floor. This created unity with the shop windows of stores. The division could consist of material differences or ornamental mouldings (12). Remarkably, roofs could hardly be seen from eye level due to common hipped roofs (13). Occasionally bay windows could be recognised in the streetscape, mainly at building corners (14). Façades were richly decorated with ornaments such as tudorarches (15). Or material differences such as plasterwork that varied with brickwork (16). The streets did not all run straight but under a slope. As a result, stone steps were often placed in front of entrances (17). Some roofs could be seen from ground level. But these were often covered on the street side with a continuous gable, called Facade roofs (18).

17. Gezicht in de Lange Delft te Middelburg met de Provinciale Bibliotheek [c. 1910] ©Zeeuwsarchief  
 18. Gezicht in de Lange Delft te Middelburg met achter de toren van de Provinciale Bibliotheek





## Lange Burg

The Lange Burg, now the Nieuwe Burg, connects the market with the abbey and the church. This was, like the Lange Delft, a shopping street just as it is today. The Lange Burg consisted of many historic retail and residential buildings. The Lange Burg is located in the centre so it was completely devastated by fires during the Second World War. Including the residence of Mayor Fernhout who was no longer mayor just before the bombing (1933-1939) (figure 19). The Lange Burg had typical Dutch architecture. Narrow buildings linked together, a plinth with shop function, ornate cornices, wooden window frames with rod division and hipped roof alternating with wolf roofs and gabled roofs (see figures 20 & 21). The same numbering as the Lange Delft is maintained.

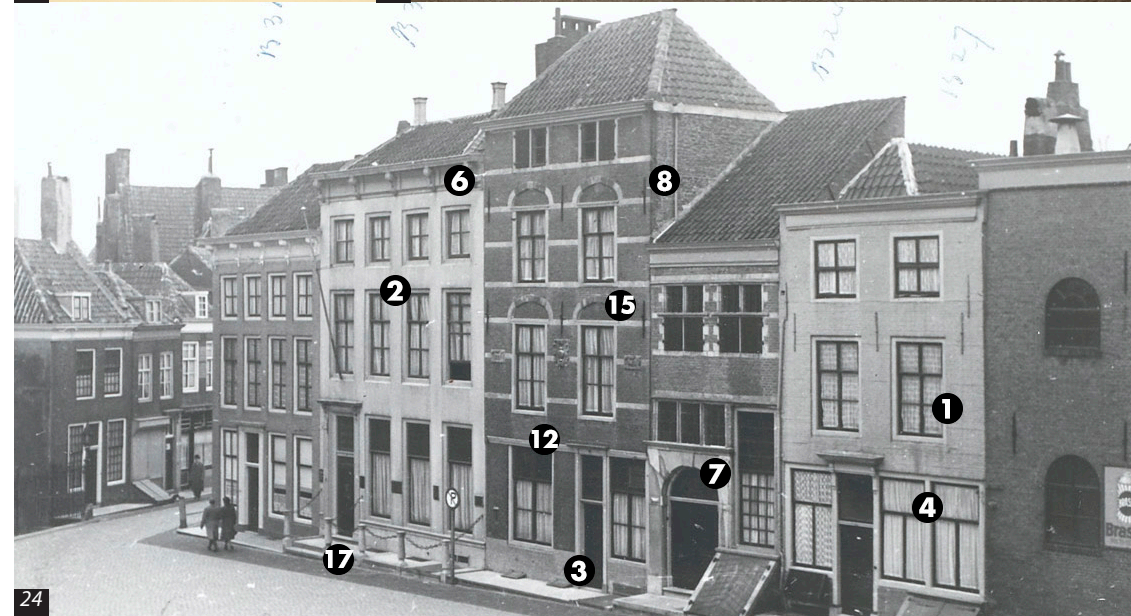
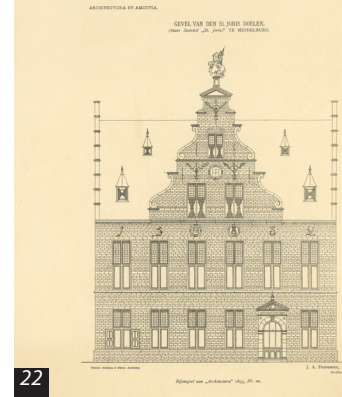


19. Residence mayor Fernhout ©Zeeuwsarchief  
20. Lange Burg from Markt ©Zeeuwsarchief M.W. Hildernisse  
21. Lange Burg seen from Markt ©Zeeuwsarchief, E. Helder



## Korte Burg & Balans

The Korte Burg was the access road along the abbey that ended in the Balans (see figure 9). This street was also completely destroyed as a result of the bombing. Because the abbey was a target for bombings, the nearby area including the Korte Burg and the Balans, was burned. At the Balans the prominent building the Sint Jorisdoolen was located, A former archers' court (figures 22 & 23). At Korte Burg, there were many houses with features mentioned earlier such as gabled roofs, symmetry, parapet, cornices, frosted windows, and close to the street with a paved front garden. Differences in material use, number of floors, heights of gutters and widths of the buildings creates diverse streetscapes (see figure 24). Figures 24 and 25 mentions the typical Dutch elements from the Korte Burg and Balans. The same numbering as the previous streets, Lange Delft and Lange Burg is maintained. There are many similarities, but there are also many differences. This street had barely any shops in the plinths of the facades, making the streetscape perceived differently. There were more front doors with cornices and basement shutters on the street side. The division between ground floor and first floor in the facades has disappeared because there are no shop premises. In contrast to the other streets, no gable roofs were used here. In the street the iconic Canton Law building was located in the Classical Baroque style (figure 25 on the left). Distinguished by heavy cornice, ionic pilasters, high parapet and lots of ornamentation.



22. St Jorisdoolen 1892 ©Zeeuwsarchief J.A. Frederiks, 1892

23. Balans - St Jorisdoolen 1893 ©Zeeuwsarchief

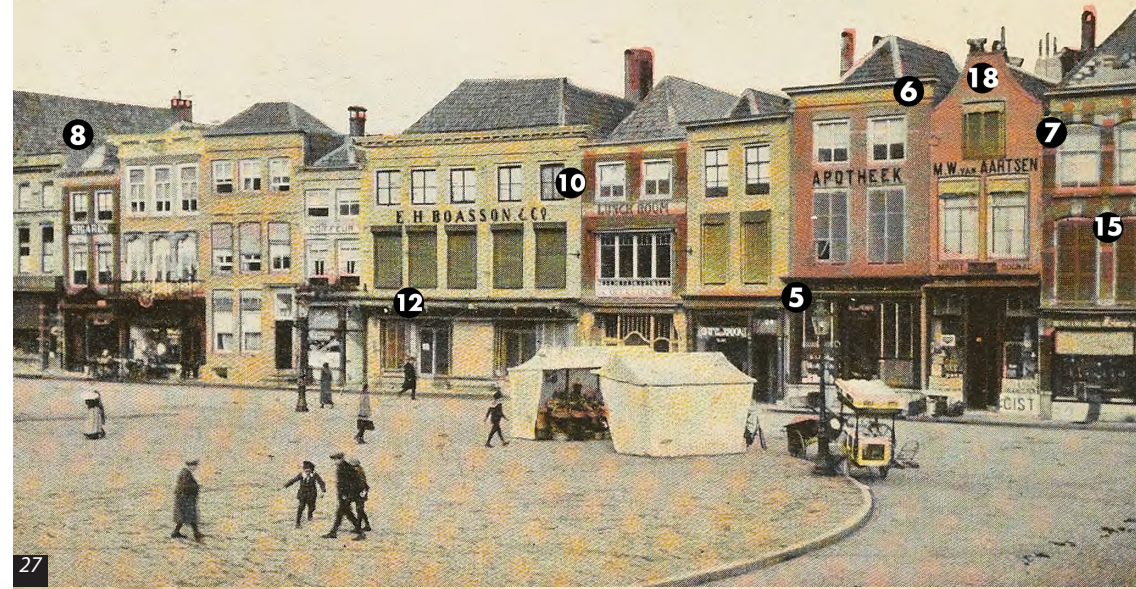
24. Korte Burg 1870 ©Zeeuwsarchief

25. Balans - St Jorisdoolen 1815 - Katongerecht left ©Zeeuwsarchief



## Markt

The Market Square is the heart of the city. The Markt is a large square located in front of the town hall (see figure 24). In a distant past, the Westmonster church stood there. The square is a meeting place with a lot of activity in the plinths of the buildings such as shops and hospitality. The market had a characteristic appearance in which the facades had many ornaments. figures 26 and 28 shows the typical Dutch architectural elements numbered the same as before. The Markt had many shops and hospitality establishments alternating with a few single houses. A clear division between plinth and floor can be seen in the facade images. Many facades also listed the type of shop in text. The facades have a lot of diversity due to the different widths, heights and applied materials. Facades are viewed differently at the Market Square than elsewhere in streets. Because these facades are adjacent to a large square, they are seen from a great distance. As a result, the roofs suddenly emerge as shown in Figure 28.



26. Grootte Markt ©Zeeuwsarchief Inboedel/archief Hendrikse

27. Grootte Markt luchtfoto 1920-1930

28. Grootte Markt ©Zeeuwsarchief



## Gravenstraat

Gravenstraat was a charming characteristic narrow street lined with business and residential properties. The plinths of the buildings were ornately decorated with shop windows. In the case of houses, there was also a clear division of ground floor and first floor in the facades. Stair gables, spout gables and neck gables were common. The well-known hipped roofs were also used. Materials varied from brick, plasterwork to wooden cornices. The Gravenstraat connects the Grote Markt with the Varkensmarkt. The figures 29 & 30 shows some typical rolling wagons that were used to move products from the large market to the surrounding area. The typical Dutch architectural elements are numbered the same as before. Because the street is so narrow, facades are being viewed differently. Unlike the Grand Market, this street can feel more enclosed. The plinths of each individual seem to form a unity with the rest of the buildings in the street (12). The shops have detailed wooden mouldings (5) separating ground floor from first floor. It is noteworthy that the roofs in these streets are mainly gable roofs rather than hipped roofs that could bring more daylight into the narrow street.



29. Gravenstraat 1895 - 1900 ©Zeeuwsarchief Zelandia Illustrata

30. Gravenstraat view from Market 1890-1900 ©Zeeuwsarchief Zelandia Illustrata

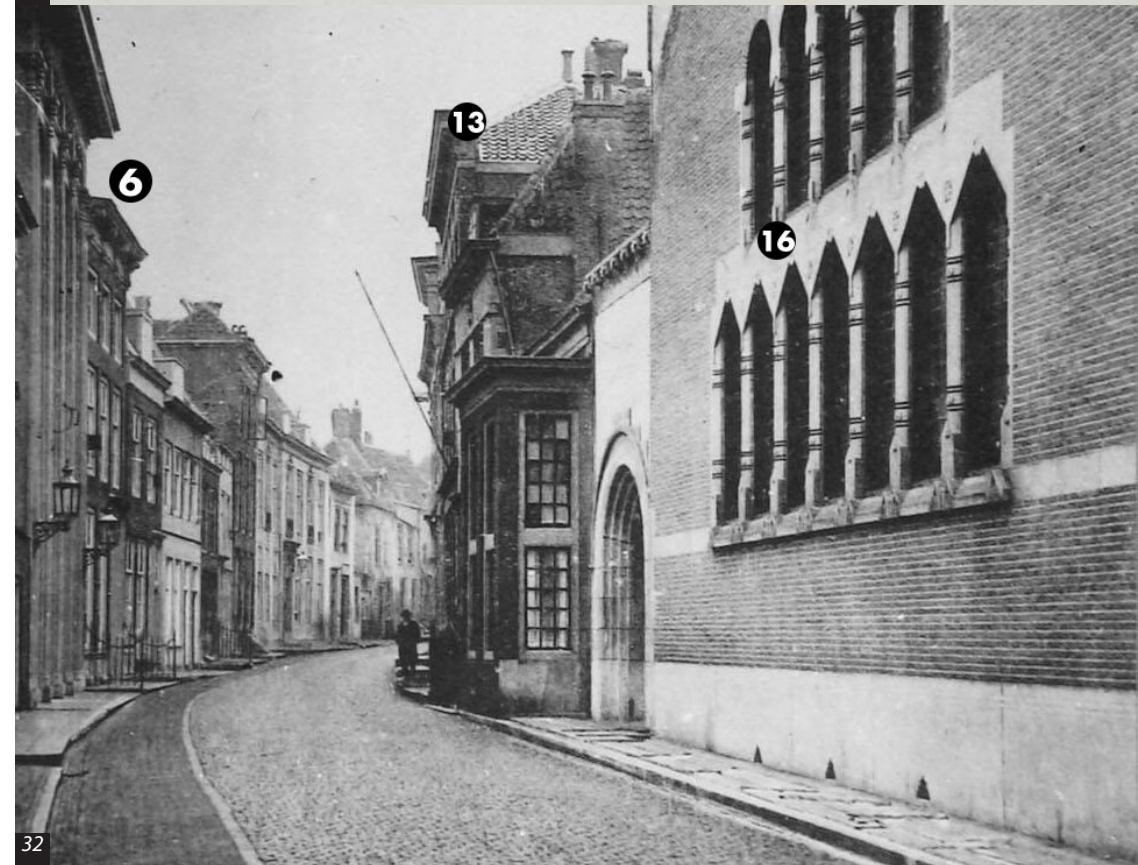


### Sint Pieterstraat

Sint Pieterstraat was a street with many houses that ran alongside the abbey. It connected the Korte Delft/Lange Delft with the Balans. The abbey was located on one side of the street with houses on the other side (see figure 32). The street also contained a few public buildings such as the Waalse kerk and the Hogere Burgers School (H.B.S). See figure 31, with the Waalse Kerk at the back and the building recognizable by its pilaster facade the H.B.S. The buildings were elaborately decorated and varied with ornaments. The houses had features just like other streets in the city such as variation in material usage (10), staggered eaves (8) and door cornices (3). In this street, it is special that houses alternate with important public buildings. these public buildings can often be recognised by their richly decorated facades and size. As shown in the figures, number 11 shows the H.B.S. with ionic pilasters. Remarkably, from the side, the facade is an one-sided continuous facade from street to roof. Unlike the houses in which window frames and doors represent the floors.



31



32

31. View of the Lange Sint Pieterstraat in Middelburg with the Waalse Kerk and the Rijks-H.B.S - 1890 - 1900 ©Zeeuwsarchief Zelandia Illustrata

32. Vrijzinnig Hervormde kerk on the right - 1930 ©Zeeuwsarchief, author unknown



## 5. ARCHITECTURE AFTER THE BOMBINGS MAY 17, 1940

The bombing on May 17, 1940 had a great impact on the appearance of the streets. It will be identified which buildings survived and what condition the historic buildings were after the bombing. The same method as previous chapter is used, the streets are treated one by one after which, in the next chapter, reconstruction will be discussed.

### Lange Delft

Lange Delft was in the middle of the historic centre. Only at the end of the street on the Damplein side, a small number of buildings survived, (Korte Delft). For the remainder, the street was completely destroyed by fires caused by bombs and shells (see figure 9).

The bottom figures show the devastation. A few buildings survived the fires but some were destroyed to the extent that they still had to be demolished. However at the end of Lange Delft, many buildings had survived, see figure 35. Among others, the Gasthuiskerk had been spared. With some minor damage to the facade, the prominent building survived.



33



36



37

33. facade provinciale bibliotheek still standing  
©Zeeuwsarchief

34. Lange Delft bij Gasthuiskerk, richting Damplein  
©Zeeuwsarchief

35. Lange Delft richting markt, less buildings survived  
©Zeeuwsarchief

36. Lange Delft richting Damplein ©Zeeuwsarchief

37. Lange Delft richting de Markt ©Zeeuwsarchief



34

35



## Lange Burg

In Lange Burg, none of the buildings survived the city fire. The figures below show the destruction of the entire street. Preservation and renovation is therefore also out of the question. The figures shows that not a single building survived. Figure 38 shows the abbey and the abbey tower ("Lange Jan") in the background. This partly survived. In figure 39, the destruction has been cleared away and the town hall can be seen in the background. Around the town hall, buildings were completely swept away and entire residential blocks were lost. It is remarkable that some trees survived. With the total destruction of this street, the city centre is no longer a historic cosy town with alleys, narrow streets and surprise, but has become a landscape with some prominent buildings standing loose in the landscape. The burnt-down town hall that is partly standing can now be seen from many places. The same applies to the Lange Jan where the top of the tower collapsed due to a major fire. "You look up against that city and from left to right you see a big conflagration. in the middle of that conflagration was the Lange Jan, it was on fire like a torch." (Jo Witte, 2014)

Because of this total destruction, a new urban plan can be made during reconstruction with contemporary requirements at the time.



38



39



40

38. Lange Burg, Abbey and Lange Jan in background. 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief

39. Lange Burg Townhall in background 1940-1941 ©Zeeuwsarchief

40. Lange Burg from the Markt 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief



## Korte Burg & Balans

Because the abbey was a target and the Korte Burg runs alongside the abbey, most of the buildings were wiped out (see figures 41 & 45). On the Balans, some buildings survived (see the figures 42 & 43). The prominent building the Sint Jorisdoelen went up in flames. In figure 47, some remnants of the facade can still be seen. The street consisted on one side of only residential houses overlooking the abbey walls. At the Balans, the first tank of the French troops arrived when they noticed the Germans approaching. The owner of the St Jorisdoelen, Bram van Overbeeke, looked down from the hotel onto the Balans gate where the French troops arrived and had access to the Abbey. Whereby they immediately indebted themselves at the bottom of the Abbey to avoid being seen by German reconnaissance planes. (Evert Blaas, 2014) Nevertheless, the Germans bombed much of the Abbey and the rest of the city centre.



41. Korte Burg - Abbey on the right - 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief

42. Balans - St Jorisdoelen 1815 - Katongerecht left ©Zeeuwsarchief

43. Balans - 1965 - Katongerecht right ©Zeeuwsarchief

44. Korte Burg 1870 ©Zeeuwsarchief

45. Korte Burg 1940 on the right abbey©Zeeuwsarchief

46. St Jorisdoelen - Balans - before 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief

47. St Jorisdoelen - Balans - 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief





## Markt

Because the Market is located in the middle of the city centre, a lot of buildings were lost here. A few single buildings (see figure 49 on the right at the back and figure 50 on the left) survived. These buildings are still standing today and have a hospitality function. The images shows that the complete Market Square was swept away, the town hall was severely damaged but partially survived. An emergency situation erupted at 2.15pm: more than 30 fires and only six nozzles. Miraculously, only two firefighters were injured while working. At about four o'clock, the old town hall on the Market Square was in danger. From the RC. Petrus and Paulus Church, the fire spread; buildings on the opposite side of Lange Noordstraat caught fire. Obviously, the Middelburg fire brigade could no longer handle it alone and the help of surrounding municipalities was requested. Fire brigades from all fourteen Walcheren municipalities and even from Goes rushed to the rescue. They arrived in the early evening, but the town hall was beyond rescue and largely burned down. (Peter Sijnke, 2010)



48. Market with townhall on background ©Zeeuwsarchief  
49. Demolished markt 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief  
50. Gravenstraat with market and townhall on background ©Zeeuwsarchief





## Gravenstraat

In figure 52, the part of the street against the Market is completely destroyed. Figure 51 shows that the other part of the street was less destroyed. Houses had burned down but were sometimes still partly standing. Figure 53 shows a picture of the clearing of the debris taken from the Market Square. At the back, the houses that remained standing can be seen. These are currently still standing see figure 54. This street was a narrow street that connected the market to the pig market (Varkensmarkt). Many shops were located in the plinths of the buildings with authentic details. A few houses at the beginning of the street on the Varkensmarkt have survived. Here you can see that the narrow street is still intact and opens out into a newer wider street that can accommodate more traffic.



51



52



53

54

51. Burned houses Gravenstraat © A.J.W. Mathijssen - Zeeuwsarchief

52. Gravenstraat with Townhall on background 1940 © Windig, A - Zeeuwsarchief

53. Survived houses Gravenstraat 1940 © Zeeuwsarchief

54. Gravenstraat 1972 - © Lamain L. - Zeeuwsarchief



### Sint Pieterstraat

Figure 56 shows that not the entire street was destroyed. Because the abbey was a target, the houses around the abbey and public buildings such as the Waalse Kerk and the Higher Dwelling School were completely destroyed. The fires resulting from the bombing destroyed decorative facades and changed the appearance of the street.



55

55. Aerial view on Sint Pieterstraat after the bombings of 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief, author unknown

56. Sint Pieterstraat after the bombings 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief Historisch-Topografische Atlas Middelburg

57. Destoration of Waalse kerk 1940 ©Zeeuwsarchief



57



56



## 6. ARCHITECTURE AFTER 1940'S REBUILDING

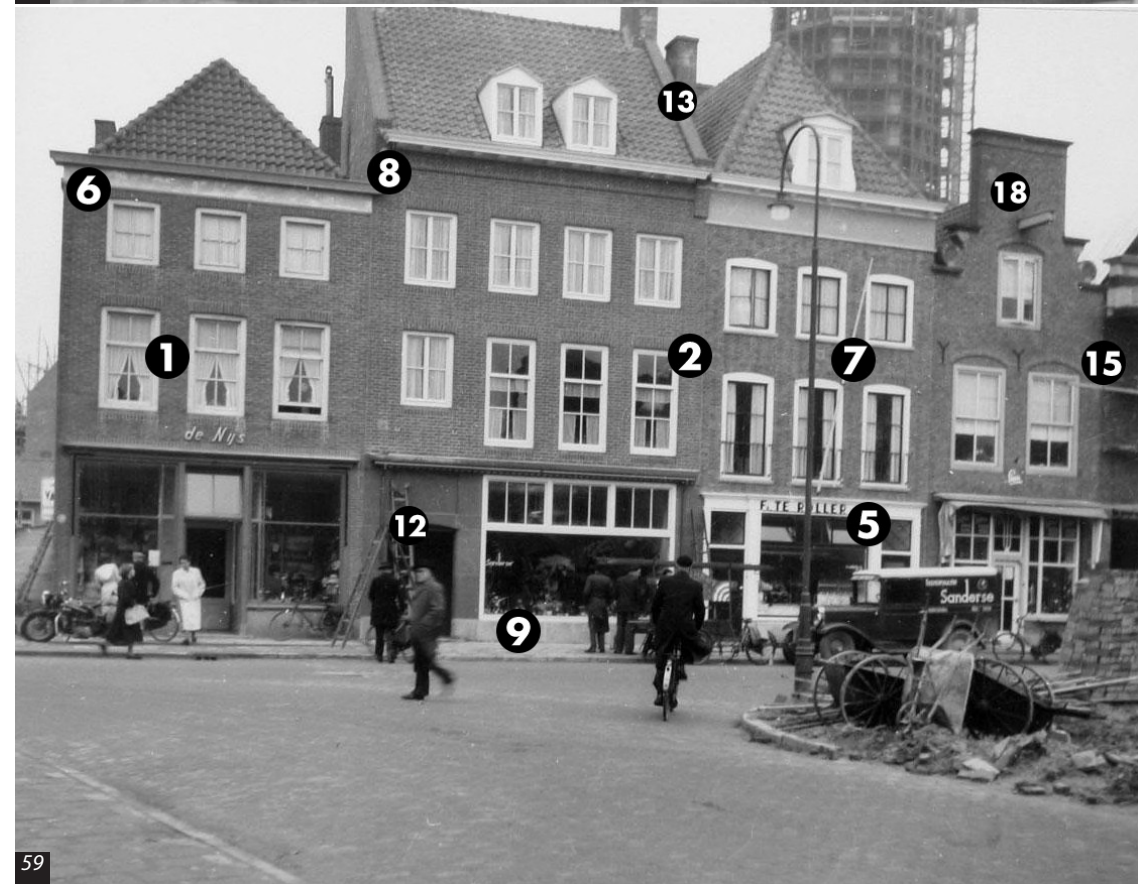
This chapter compares the pre-war and post-war architecture of the streets previously mentioned. Are the buildings restored, preserved or reconstructed. Or is it complete new construction with pre-war architectural elements incorporated? Images of buildings after reconstruction are compared with pre-war images.

### Lange Delft

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Lange Delft was completely destroyed except the Korte Delft (end of the street to Damplein). Restoration and preservation is therefore largely out of the question. We saw that the facade of the provincial library was still standing, but was too damaged that it still had to be demolished. In Chapter 4, images were analysed with properties of facades, these are summarised here. Some elements of the pre-war buildings can be seen in the post-reconstruction buildings of 1940. In the images, the elements that have been returned are numbered the same as chapter 4. Where previously only windows with rod divisions existed, windows with large glass panes were also applied during reconstruction because this was possible at the time. The so-called T and H windows were applied but the characteristic rods were also reintroduced (1). To bring back the look of the streets as before the war, as many features as possible have been returned. The look of the sliding windows were also reinstated. These could possibly not slide but they had been given this appearance (2). Because Lange Delft was a shopping street, the new buildings mainly had shop windows in the plinths. No houses with front doors were situated on the ground floor, so the variety of functions disappeared. Just like the typical front door with decorative mouldings. Before the destruction, these shops could be recognised by the elaborately decorated shop windows with wooden cornices. The wooden cornices have returned but with large glass windows and less detail (5). The ornamental roof mouldings have been brought back with less detail (6). Arches at the top of the window frames have been returned as ornaments (7). Because everything is newly built, it is noteworthy that eaves do not blend into each other and a varying façade appearance is created by the staggered eaves (8), heights of windows and shop windows. Many parapets were applied in stone but less detailed than before (9). All facades are made of bricks and there are no longer facades of natural stone or plaster. The difference between plinth and floors is clearly visible through cornices and borders (12). Roofs, as before, are hipped roofs with dormers. Ornaments such as arches above window frames are evident in the street scene (15). Gable roofs were also decorated with ornaments (18).

58. Lange Delft richting de Damplein, ten hoogte van Segeerstraat ©Zeeuwsarchief

59. Lange Delft kruispunt met Segeerstraat ©Zeeuwsarchief





## Lange Burg

The changes in Lange Burg is not only the street name to Nieuwe Burg, but especially the buildings. The location of the complete street has also been shifted. Previously, the street ran in a straight line from the market to the Balans. Now there is a kink and more space has been created around the abbey. The aesthetics of the buildings changed after the 1940 bombing. The entire street was completely destroyed so everything had to be rebuilt. The re-building was done in the same style as the Lange Delft so the streets have few changes in the historical features. It is notable in the street that window frames and floors have almost the same heights. Roof cornices do still stagger in heights to maintain diversity. The one-sided material use of brick has given the street less diversity. Moreover, the street still has many pre-destruction features but with less characteristic detailing. The street had many shops in the plinths with alternation of houses. As a result, there is variety of front doors and shop windows. The roofs provide the most variety in the street by alternating hipped roofs and gable roofs. They also incorporate decorative elements.



60. Nieuwe Burg Middelburg  
©Zeeuwsarchief  
61. Nieuwe Burg Middelburg  
©Zeeuwsarchief





## Korte Burg & Balans

In the Korte Burg, the houses were the most devastated so the biggest changes took place there. In the Balans, a few buildings survived. Although the prominent St Jorisdoelen was burned down. However, they rebuilt this in its original state (see figures 62 & 63). The houses newly built after 1940 have features of the past. Like Lange Delft and Lange Burg, these are numbered the same.

Before the destruction, the street had many shops in the plinths. As the street is now reformed and divided between Lange Burg where shops are now situated and Korte Burg where mainly houses are situated. The houses have many pre-war features such as ornate front door frames, rods and ornate eaves. The Balance still has some buildings standing that survived the bombing, such as the Canton Law building (figure 65). In this street, there is more diversity in material use and ornamentation as other reconstructed streets. For example, painted bricks and plaster as additions have been used. Ornamentations such as arches above window frames and detailed cornices are also applied.



62. St Jorisdoelen 1969 ©Fotoarchief PZC

63. St Jorisdoelen 2022 ©Hotel St Joris - TEAM Leisure

64. Korte Burg 1972 - 1978 - Architect Arend Rothuizen ©Zeeuwsarchief

65. Ringrijders in de Korte Burg te Middelburg tijdens een rondrit op Koninginnedag 1960 ©Zeeuwsarchief J. Bitter

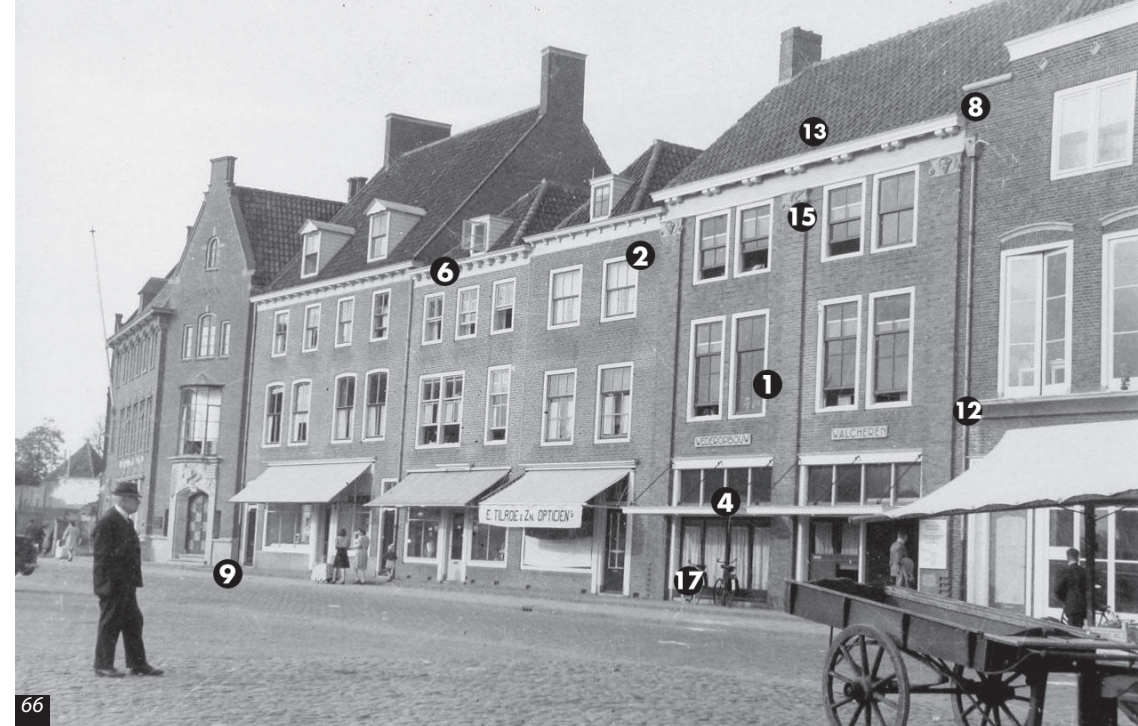


65

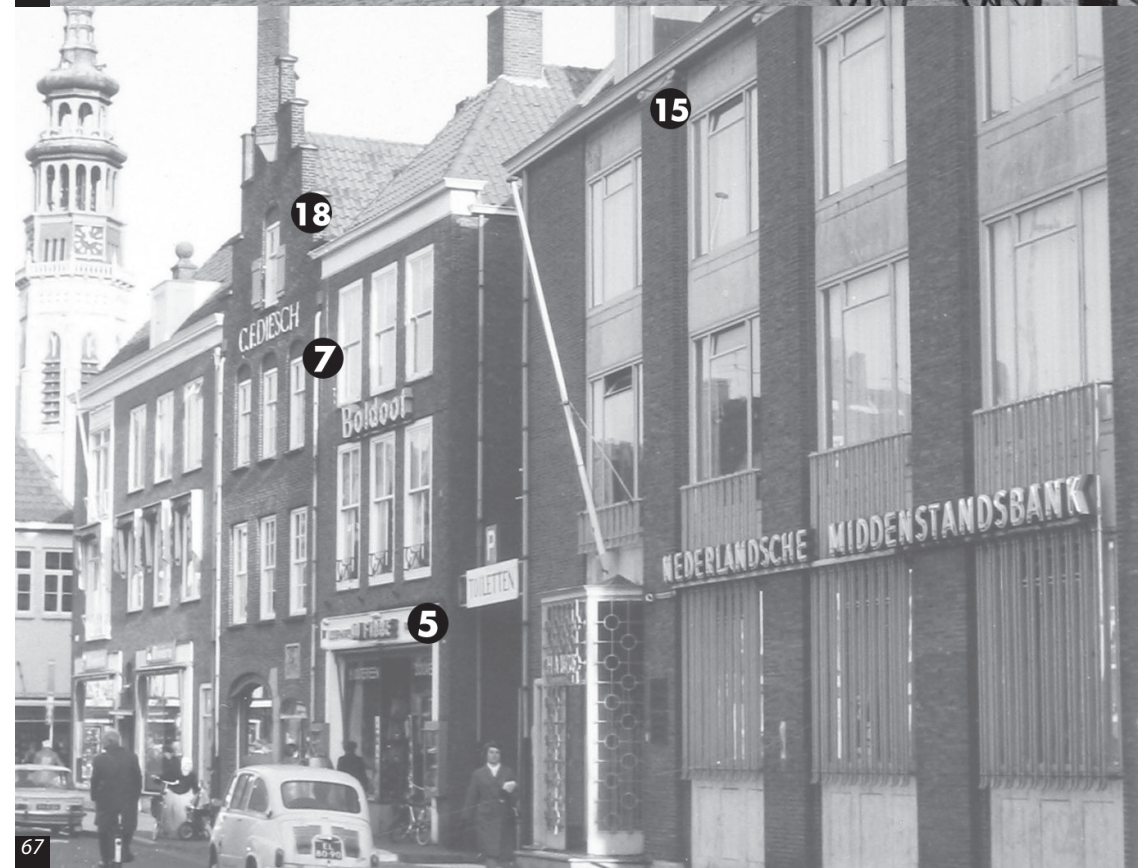


## Markt

During reconstruction, they changed the infrastructure in and around the market. This is where the Lange burg was re-laid and changed to Nieuwe Burg and Korte Burg. A row of residential blocks was moved, reducing the size and reshaping the market. Next to the Markt, a square called 'plein 1940' was created in reference to the bombing. These indentations were possible because the residential blocks were completely destroyed. Old pre-war elements have been brought back. However, the charm and characteristic ornaments are not as before. Many points of the list recur in the facade images but with less detail. See figures 66 & 67 with the numbering that also applied to the previous streets. Strikingly, buildings have much the same look with same bricks, windows, etc. but diversity has been created by applying different sizes. However, in figure 67, the Nederlandsche middenstandsbank seems to be inspired by the classic baroque style. With the ionic pilasters and high parapet. However, it is far from incomparable because of the little detailing and large window sections that were not common at the time.



66



67

66. Markt 1946 ©Zeeuwsarchief

67. Markt 1969 ©Zeeuwsarchief



## Gravenstraat

The newest part of the street (beginning of the street against the Markt) has been analysed on the characteristic elements that were restored. Interestingly, Gravenstraat has the fewest authentic details brought back during reconstruction compared to other bombed streets. Figure 69 shows the part of Gravenstraat that was not destroyed, here a lot of detail can still be seen such as the stone steps, decorative cornices around shopfronts, natural stone cladding and parapets of stone. These are all authentic elements not seen in the reconstruction compared to other streets such as Lange Delft or Lange Burg. Figure 68 shows the buildings of the reconstruction with the elements numbered that have been brought back, such as ornate doorframes, rods and staggered gutters. It is also noteworthy that the street has become a lot wider than before. Previously, the street used carts and in the new era, cars were used which allowed the reconstruction to adapt the infrastructure to the new needs.



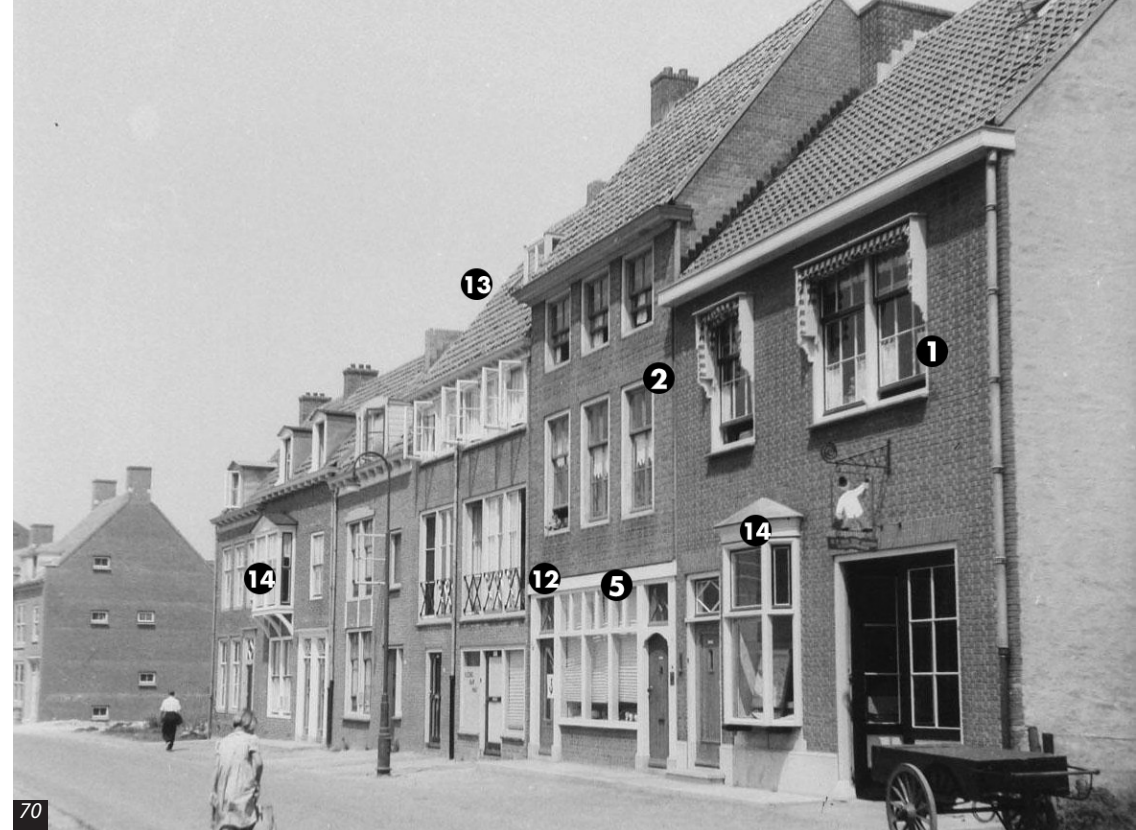
68. Gravenstraat 1960 ©Zeeuwsarchief

69. Gravenstraat 1963 ©Zeeuwsarchief

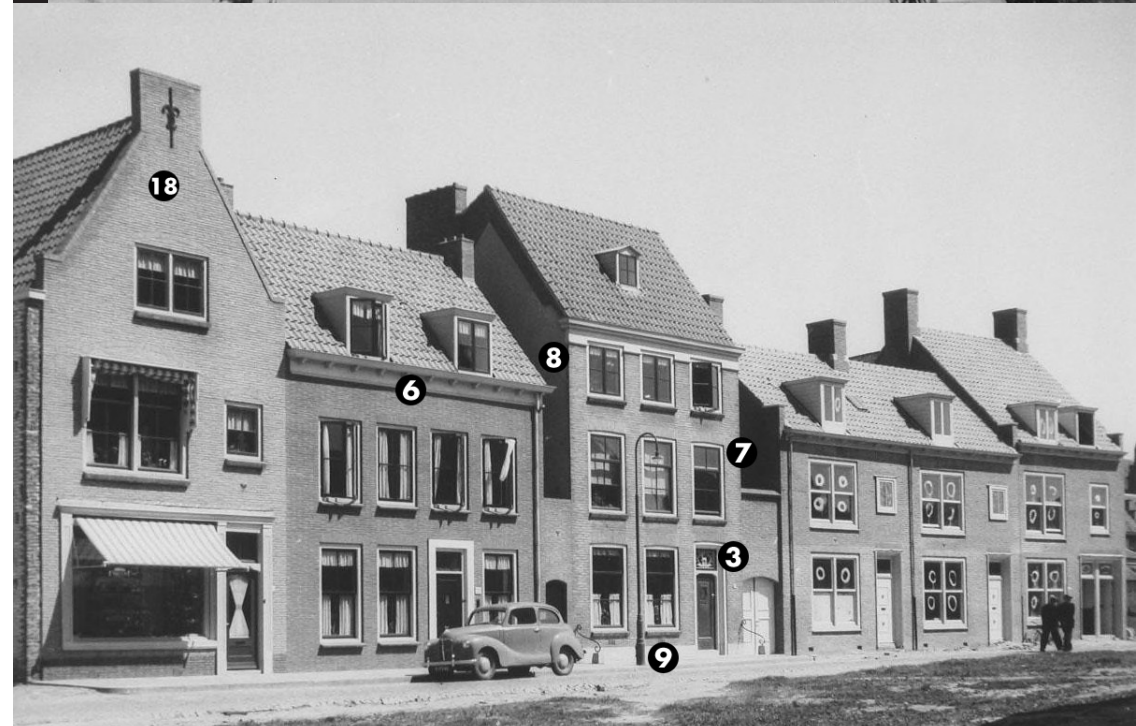


## Sint Pieterstraat

During the reconstruction of Sint Pieterstraat, the abbey was restored and houses were rebuilt with elements of the past. See the figures with the elements numbered. Many elements such as ornate cornices, sash windows with rod divisions, and parapets of stone have been brought back. Even bay windows that were left behind in other streets have returned. You can also see in the buildings that new elements have been integrated such as primarily stone facades and larger windows. Glass could be made larger at the time, reducing the need for rods.



70



71



73

70. Sint Pieterstraat 1950 ©Zeeuwsarchief

71. Sint Pieterstraat 1950 ©Zeeuwsarchief

72. New Provinciehuis 1959 ©Zeeuwsarchief,  
Maas, A.P. Provincie Planologische Dienst

## 7. CONCLUSION

By studying facades of buildings from before the bombing, a list of characteristic features of the facades has been developed. By examining these images, the current street scene can easily distinguished between what is 17th and 18th century and what was built during reconstruction after 1940. In the 17th and 18th centuries, there were many monuments in the city centre. In 1940, many of these buildings were destroyed resulting in a different appearance in the streets. It can be concluded that the reconstruction took into account facade features of the past, because it contains elements of facades from before the bombing. In the post-1940 reconstruction era, for example, it was possible to install larger glass windows. Yet they often chose to apply the characteristic rod division with smaller panes to bring back the historic appearance. The characteristic sash window at the top of the frames have also been brought back in every street. This can be seen because the top sticks out and it has a thicker girder between the two windows. The classic frames around doors is also a distinctive recurring element. In many shopping streets, before the destruction, there was an alternation between residential houses and shops. In the new situation, mainly shops are located in the plinths of the buildings. These shops previously had ornamental mouldings made of wood. In the new situation, they are less iconic and decorated.

A typical Middelburg building is a symmetrical facade whose window distribution depends on the width of the building. There will always be a certain equal distance from the edge of the façade and between the window openings. In the plinth, the windows are often closer together than the floor above because of the need to make room for the front door. The street runs into a stone parapet, which in turn runs into brick. In shopping streets, the plinth of the façades of residential houses sometimes shows a division between ground floor and first floor in order to have the same façade layout as the shops. Transition between floor and roof occurred via ornamental eaves. Roofs were mainly hipped roofs alternating with gable roofs. Buildings that had a certain status or wealthy owners were often more decorated with ornaments. For example, in the neo-classical style or renaissance style feature were the natural stone facades and blocked pilasters, mid-risalts and cornices.

By investigating which characteristic elements were present before the city fire, it is possible to see if these elements are reflected in the buildings of the reconstruction. By mapping the similarities and differences, restoration architects can redesign elements that were previously present and have returned to Middelburg's street scene. Without studying history, it is impossible to investigate how Middelburg came to be the way it looks today and which architectonic features were brought back during reconstruction. Even though reconstruction was not that long ago, it is still in the centre of a protected cityscape. Which means that the appearance of the buildings is not allowed to be changed easily, probably because of the characteristic facades brought back during reconstruction.

Architects of new buildings can also take this into account. There are still empty lots in the city centre where not have been built after the bombing. These new buildings can contain elements of historical characteristic details such as cornices, rod divisions, door frames, parapets and symmetry. AWG Architects designed a new construction plan in the city centre. These newly built dwellings have characteristics of their surroundings, arguing: "If you are going to build new in such a special place, the plan has to fit in with the surroundings as well as enrich the city". The plan at Zuidsingel and Korte Noordstraat has typical Middelburg architectural features such as detailed cornices, varying storey heights and hipped roofs alternating with gable roofs. However, this will never be able to imitate the earlier streetscape because many technical details were made by hand and this is not feasible in today's reality because of the high cost of labor. This design also lacks much detail as in craftsmanship of bricks and wooden mouldings. However, linking and fitting into the surroundings has been an important aspect for the architects and have created this by copying elements, morphology and size from the surroundings. Also, weathering and appearance of old bricks cannot be imitated with new bricks. Imitation is not a goal in itself because it is fine to show the outside world what is new and what is old in order to continue telling history. But in order not to lose the Middelburg character, restoration and new construction will have to respect the history and characteristic elements from before the war.



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